



MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY OF ARMENIA

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EXPERT OPINION OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY

Regarding the refusal to accredit journalists of “Gortsntats” biweekly newspaper to the National Assembly

A. FACTS

1. On January 8, 2026, Inara Danielyan, the founding director of “Gortsntats” biweekly newspaper, applied to Media Ethics Observatory (MEO), claiming that two journalists from the newspaper had been denied accreditation to the National Assembly. The refusal was justified on the grounds that the [NA Accreditation Regulation](#) sets out accreditation only for journalists from media that publish on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis, whereas “Gortsntats” is a biweekly newspaper.
2. According to the complainant, “prior to the submission of “Gortsntats” accreditation application, NA Chief of Staff Davit Arakelyan (“Civil Contract” faction), permitted the entry of a disguised censor into the press lodge, circumventing paragraph 24 of the Regulation on Journalist Accreditation in the National Assembly.” The complainant further claimed that this individual had attempted to exert psychological pressure on the “Gortsntats” reporter.
3. In response to the founding director of “Gortsntats” Inara Danielyan, NA Chief of Staff Davit Arakelyan stated in letter No. 1/5382-2025 that the data submitted by the media failed to comply with the requirements of paragraph 8 of the aforementioned Regulation.

B. LEGISLATIVE AND ETHICAL NORMS

1. General legal framework

The right to freedom of expression and information is guaranteed by the RA Constitution, the Law “On Mass Communication,” Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the principles promoted by the OSCE Commissioner for Freedom of the Media. These norms establish that any restrictions placed on the activities of journalists must be lawful, meet the criteria of necessity and proportionality and be free from arbitrariness or discrimination.

2. MEO [Regulations](#)

5.4. MEO accepts for review information disputes involving entities officially engaged in the information field, and, when necessary, issues a statement or publishes an expert opinion.

C. EXPERT OPINION

Media Ethics Observatory,

having examined the complaint submitted by Inara Danielyan, the founding director of “Gortsntats” biweekly newspaper, together with the justifications presented by the NA Chief of Staff, and the Regulation on Journalist Accreditation in the National Assembly,

notes the following:

- ✓ The main reasoning offered for not accrediting journalists from “Gortsntats” biweekly - that the NA accreditation Regulation entails the accreditation of journalists only from media that publish on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis - is not well-founded and convincing from a legal standpoint.
- ✓ Not granting accreditation to the journalists of “Gortsntats” biweekly newspaper citing the frequency of its publication as a formal justification constitutes a means to restrict journalistic activity, a form of indirect pressure on the dissemination of information, and an obstacle to the exercise of public oversight.
- ✓ MEO is unable to discuss what happened in the NA press lodge, since the individual who posed questions to the “Gortsntats” reporter remains unidentified, and there are no sufficient grounds to link that incident to the denial of accreditation.
- ✓ The Information Disputes Council (IDC) has also reviewed this matter and [concluded](#) that the National Assembly Staff and its Chief, in the process of resolving the issue of accrediting the journalists from Gortsntats newspaper, violated the requirements of the Law “On Fundamentals of Administrative Action and Administrative Proceedings,” interpreted the provisions of Article 6 of the Law “On Mass Communication” to the detriment of the media outlet, exhibited discriminatory attitude toward it, and, by rejecting accreditation, unreasonably restricted the editorial office's right to disseminate information, opinions and ideas.
- ✓ MEO observes that an unhealthy, strained and conflictual atmosphere has emerged between deputies and journalists in the National Assembly. In such an environment, the accreditation procedure is used in practice not as an organizational instrument, but as a lever to restrict the activities of certain media. This approach deepens the polarization within the media sector, disrupts mutual trust between journalists and state institutions, and negatively affects the public's right to receive information.

In light of the above, MEO considers that:

- ✓ the revocation of accreditation of journalists representing “Gortsntats” biweekly newspaper has no sufficient legal foundation,
- ✓ is based on an arbitrary and discriminatory interpretation of the

- accreditation regulation,
- ✓ runs counter to the fundamental principles of freedom of expression and information.

***Adopted on February 9, 2026
by the following MEO composition:***

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[Media Ethics Observatory](#) has been established by the media that have joined the Self-Regulation Initiative, which counts 100 members as of today. MEO is guided by the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, adopted on March 10, 2007 and revised at the May 18, 2024 general meeting of the Self-Regulation Initiative.